

Obtaining the Unobtainable: Researcher and Librarian Collaborations for Enhancing Access to Unconventional Information Resources Jonathan A. Allan (Brandon University); Heather E. Tornblom (Brandon University)

This paper is a co-authored project between Jonathan A. Allan, Canada Research Chair in Queer Theory, and Heather Tornblom, Supervisor of Interlibrary Loans at Brandon University. We begin with the premise that too often the relationship between the researcher and the librarian is eschewed. The researcher gets the credit for the work, but the efforts of the librarian are often hidden away and the partnership between researcher and librarian is largely unrecognized. In this paper, the researcher, Allan, begins by framing his research agenda, which involves grey literature, popular literature, and pornography. In his research, he studies men's bodies and sexualities. His recent book is a cultural study of the foreskin and his project draws on newspapers, pregnancy manuals, sex manuals, books about puberty, safer-sex pamphlets, and pornography, all of which are not often collected by scholarly libraries. In his section of the paper, Allan outlines some of the challenges he has faced, and some of the successes of working closely with Tornblom. In the second part of the paper, Tornblom discusses the role of the academic librarian in facilitating access to research materials. She details some of the difficulties librarians face in obtaining grey literature, popular magazines, pornography, consumer health information, and other specialized publications on behalf of researchers, and outlines some of the variables that influence the collection and retention of these items in libraries. She also considers the importance of a strong working relationship between librarians and researchers as a key factor in improving access to information and supporting research activities. Together, they finish the paper by offering suggestions on how to move forward in the spirit of collaboration.